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Operation
Our Town Reporter

A monthly newsletter about our efforts to help prevent and reduce drug abuse and crime in Blair County

Volume 18, Issue 11 - November 2026

OperationOurTown.org

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UPMC Altoona
Value Drug Company
Ward Transport & Logistics Corp.
Wieland Small Tube Products

aha Altoona Housing Authority

Landlord Educational Workshop
Friday, November 13, 2026

Altoona Grand Hotel
1 Sheraton Drive
Altoona, PA 16601

Registration – 8:30-8:45am
Program – 8:45am-2:45pm

Free to attend - Lunch included

Topics Covered:

- **MDJ Frequently Asked Questions**
- **City of Altoona Community Development Updates**
- **Signs of Illegal Drug Activity**
- **Common Fair Housing Violations**
- **Eviction Process & Leases**
- **Common Code Violations & Blight**
- **Tax Claim Sales**
- **Tips on How Landlords Can Help Tenants be Successful**

Vendor tables will be set up in the back of the room for attendees to visit during lunch (11:45am-12:30pm) for more information & resources

Pre-registration is required by November 6th:
Email: oot@operationourtown.org **or**
Call: (814) 296-8730

Mission

To facilitate partnerships between community and business to fight drug abuse and crime through proven law enforcement, treatment, and prevention techniques.

Find us on

REPORT DRUG ACTIVITY

PUSH OUT THE PUSHER™

814-693-3020

BLAIR DRUG AND ALCOHOL PARTNERSHIPS

Empowering Healthy Lifestyles

814-381-0921



Click on the image above to view the 2026 OOT Annual Report!

Month of November - Meetings

11/2	Booker T. Washington meeting	4:00 pm	Central Blair Recreation & Park Commission
11/3	Northern Blair Roundtable meeting	12:00 pm	The Bull Pen restaurant
11/12	Faith-based Roundtable meeting	1:00 pm	Blair Drug & Alcohol Partnerships & Zoom
11/18	Marketing Roundtable meeting	4:00 pm	Zach's

Essay Entry Deadline - November 6

View - Essay Contest Form

How can you be a positive influence to help your friends avoid drug use?

YOU TELL US! **The Best ME Is Drug FREE!**

OPERATION Our Town



Taking Back Our Neighborhoods

The Altoona Mirror & Operation Our Town invite area students in 6th through 12th grade in Blair & surrounding counties who are 11 or older to enter

"How can you be a positive influence to help your friends avoid drug use?"

contest by submitting an essay on the topic.

The local winner, selected by the Marketing Roundtable of Operation Our Town, will be awarded **$250.00** in gift cards to The Meadows Original Frozen Custard located in Hollidaysburg, which may be used towards the purchase of frozen custard or miniature golf. Runner-up prize of $100 Visa gift card provided by Imler's Poultry.

The Meadows Original FROZEN CUSTARD
Hollidaysburg, PA

Submit entries to:
oot@operationourtown.org
OR

Operation Our Town
5508 6th Avenue, Rear
Altoona PA 16602
ATTN: Essay Contest
Entry Deadline: Friday, November 6, 2026

Altoona Mirror
Making It Happen For You

ENTRY FORM

NAME _____

AGE _____

GRADE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE # _____

PARENT OR GUARDIAN NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS _____

OPERATION OUR TOWN
Essay Promotion Rules

GENERAL: No purchase is necessary. The act of entering constitutes acceptance of the rules and decisions of Operation Our Town.

ELIGIBILITY: The contest is open to 6th through 12th grade students in Blair & surrounding counties who are 11 or older.

CONTEST: The contest begins on October 1, 2026 and ends at midnight on November 6, 2026.

ESSAY TOPIC:
The submitted essay topic is "How can you be a positive influence to help your friends avoid drug use?" Essays will be judged on:

- Creativity & originality
- Persuasiveness
- Grammar & spelling
- Relevancy of response to topic
- Entries must be 500 words or less.

Applicants may opt to cite external references. All external references must be properly cited and will not be counted toward the word count. All entries must be original work of the applicant and have not been previously entered in another competition nor been previously published.

PRIZE: $250.00 in gift cards to The Meadows Original Frozen Custard 471 Municipal Drive, Duncansville, PA 16635. $100 Visa gift card to Runner-up provided by Imler's Poultry.

HOW TO ENTER: Entries are to be mailed directly to the Operation Our Town office - 5508 6th Avenue, Rear – Altoona, PA 16602 – Attention: Essay Contest, or emailed to oot@operationourtown.org no later than Nov. 6th. All entries must include the applicant's name, age, grade and school.

CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION:

- All submitted entries become the exclusive intellectual property of OOT. OOT obtains all rights to use and republish all or any part of such entry upon submission.
- OOT and its members may use prizewinners' names, likeness and other identifying information (such as hometown, school or grade) in promotional materials relating to this competition.
- Winners (or their parents/guardians) will be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility, originality and compliance with the official rules, a liability release, and a publicity release as a condition to receiving their prize.
- All taxes shall be the responsibility of the winners of the competition.
- By submitting an application and/or entry to OOT, the applicant agrees to all of the terms and conditions set forth in these official rules.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- No entry will be given preference over any other essay on the basis of an applicant's name, school, grade, gender, race, ethnicity, geographic origin, or any legally protected status.
- No entries will be returned to the applicants.
- No notice will be given to the applicants with non-winning or non-conforming entries and applications.

Grant Recipient Highlight:

NAMI Blair County PA

The Power of Creativity

By: Nick Gordon, Operation Our Town Community Outreach Coordinator



The Power of Creativity serves children 3 years & up and their families in Blair County, with a focus on helping children develop emotional awareness, healthy coping skills, and positive ways to express themselves. The program also encourages parents and caregivers to participate, strengthening family relationships and helping families better understand and support one another's emotional well-being.

The program is offered in scheduled 11-week sessions, typically in the spring and fall. Specific days and times may vary depending on the needs of participating families and the availability of program locations. Through guided activities, creative projects, and group discussions, participants have opportunities to explore their emotions, build relationships, and learn from one another in a safe, judgment-free environment.

The mission of The Power of Creativity is to promote positive mental health and emotional well-being in children and families through creative expression, education, and meaningful connections. At NAMI, creativity provides a powerful opportunity for children to express feelings they may not yet have the words to explain. By combining art, emotional education, and family engagement, they help participants develop confidence, resilience, communication skills, and healthy ways to navigate life's challenges.

Through activities such as the Art in Emotions sessions, participants explore feelings, practice healthy coping strategies, develop communication skills, and build stronger family connections. The program also incorporates a museum visit that encourages participants to experience creativity and artistic expression in a different environment.

Children often struggle to explain what they are feeling, but art provides another way for them to communicate. Through creative activities, children can explore emotions without the pressure of finding the right words. For more information about any of the services NAMI Blair County PA offers through The Power of Creativity or to learn more, please check out their info below.

The Power Of Creativity For Children's and Families' Mental Health
NAMI Blair County PA
www.namiblaircountypa.org
1-814-327-7083

NAMI Blair County PA
Contact: Aimee Burns, Executive Director
Email: aimeeb@namiblaircountypa.org
Address: 711 9th Avenue Altoona, PA 16602
Phone: 814-327-7083
Website: www.namiblaircountypa.org
Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00am-3:00pm

NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Blair County PA